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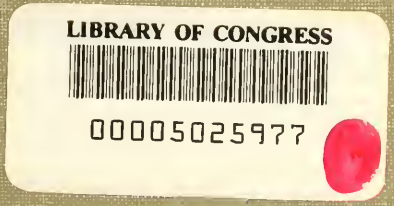

MR. WEBSTER'S SPEECH,

IN THE

U. S. SENATE, MARCH 23, 1848,

UPON THE

WAR WITH MEXICO.

BOSTON:
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REMARKS.

In SENATE, *March* 23, 1848.

After the morning hour had expired, the galleries, lobbies and floor of the Senate Chamber being densely crowded, Mr. Webster addressed the President and the Senate as follows:

Mr. President:

On Friday a bill passed the Senate for raising ten regiments of new troops, for the further prosecution of the war against Mexico, and we have been informed that that measure is shortly to be followed, in this branch of the Legislature, by a bill to raise twenty regiments of volunteers for the same service.

I was desirous of expressing my opinions against the object of these bills, against the supposed *necessity* which leads to their enactment, and against the general policy which they are apparently designed to promote. Circumstances, personal to myself, but beyond my control, compelled me to forego, on that day, the execution of that design.

The bill now before the Senate, is a measure for raising money, to meet the exigencies of the government and to provide the means, as well as for other things, for the pay and support of these thirty regiments.

Sir, the scenes through which we have passed and are passing here, are various. For a fortnight, the world supposes, we have been occupied with the ratification of a treaty of peace: and that within these walls,

"The world shut out,"

notes of peace and hopes of peace, nay, strong *assurances* of peace, as well as indications of peace, have been uttered to console and to cheer us. Sir, it has been over and over again stated, and is public, that we have ratified *a treaty*,— of course, a treaty of peace; and, as the country has been led to suppose, not of an uncertain, empty and delusive peace; but of real and substantial, a gratifying and an *enduring* peace, — a peace which should stanch the wounds of war, prevent the further flow of human blood, cut off these enormous expenses, and return our friends and our brothers, and our children, if they be yet living, from the land of slaughter, and the land of still more dismal destruction by climate, to our firesides and our arms.

Hardly had these cheering and exhilirating notes ceased upon our ears, when,

in resumed public session, we are summoned to fresh *warlike* operations, to create a new army of thirty thousand men, for the further prosecution of the war, to carry that war, in the language of the President, still more dreadfully into the *vital parts* of the enemy, and to press home, by fire and sword, the claims we make, the grounds which we insist upon, against our fallen, prostrate, I had almost said our ignoble enemy.

If I may judge from the opening speech of the honorable Senator from Michigan, and from other speeches that have been made upon this floor, there has been no time, from the commencement of the war, when it has been more urgently pressed upon us, not only to maintain, but to increase our military means; not only to continue the war, but to press it still more vigorously than as yet has been done.

Pray, what does all this mean? Is it, I ask, confessed then, — is it *confessed*, that we are no nearer a peace than we were, when we snatched up that bit of paper called, or miscalled, *a treaty*, and ratified it? Have we yet to fight it out to the utmost, as if nothing pacific had intervened?

I wish, sir, to treat the proceedings of this, and of every department of the government, with the utmost respect. God knows that the constitution of this government, and the exercise of its just powers in the administration of the laws under it, have been the cherished object of all my unimportant life. But, if the subject were not one too deeply interesting, I should say our proceedings here might well enough cause a smile. In the ordinary transaction of the foreign relations of this, and of all other governments, the course has been to *negotiate* first, and to ratify *afterwards*. This seems to be the natural order of conducting intercourse between foreign States. We have chosen to reverse this order. We ratify first, and negotiate afterwards. We set up a treaty, such as we find it and choose to make it, and then send two Ministers Plenipotentiary to negotiate thereupon in the Capitol of the enemy. One would think, sir, the ordinary course of proceeding much the juster; that to negotiate, to hold intercourse and come to some arrangement, by authorized agents, and then to submit that arrangement to the sovereign authority to which these agents are responsible, would be always the most desirable method of proceeding. It strikes me that the course we have adopted is strange, is *grotesque*. So far as I know, it is unprecedented in the history of diplomatic intercourse. Learned gentlemen on the floor of the Senate, interested to defend and protect this course, may, in their extensive reading, have found examples of it. I know of none.

Sir, we are in possession, by military power, of New Mexico and California, countries belonging hitherto to the United States of Mexico. We are informed by the President that it is his purpose to retain them, to consider them as territory fit to be attached, and to be attached, to these United States of America. And our military operations and designs now before the Senate, are to enforce this claim of the Executive of the United States. We are to compel Mexico to agree, that the part of her dominion called New Mexico, and the other called California, shall be ceded to us; that we are in possession, as is said, and that she shall yield her title to us. This is the precise object of this new army of 30,000 men. Sir, it is the identical object, in my judgment, for which the war was originally commenced, for which it has hitherto been prosecuted, and in furtherance of which this treaty is to be used, but as one means to bring about the general result, that general result depending, after all, on our own superior power, and on the necessity of submitting to any terms which we may prescribe to fallen, fallen, fallen Mexico!

Sir, the members composing the other House, the more popular branch

of the Legislature, have all been elected since, I had almost said, the fatal, I will say, the remarkable, events of the 11th and 13th days of May, 1846. That other house has passed a resolution, affirming that "the war with Mexico was begun unconstitutionally and unnecessarily by the Executive government of the United States." I concur in that sentiment; I hold that to be the most recent and authentic expression of the will and opinion of the majority of the people of the United States.

There is, sir, another proposition, not so authentically announced hitherto, but, in my judgment, equally true, and equally capable of demonstration, and that is, that this war was begun, has been continued, and is now prosecuted, for the great and leading purpose of the acquisition of new territory, out of which to bring in new States, with their Mexican population, into this our Union of the United States.

If unavowed at first, this purpose did not remain unavowed long. However often it may be said that we did not go to war for conquest —

"——Credat Judæus Appella,
Non ego,"——

Does not every body see, that the moment we *get possession* of territory, we must retain it and make it our own? Now I think that this original object has not been changed, has not been varied. Sir, I think it exists in the eyes of those who originally contemplated it, and who began the war for it, as plain, as attractive to them, and from which they no more avert their eyes now, than they did then, or have done at any time since. We have *compelled* a treaty of cession. We know in our consciences that *it is compelled.* We use it as an instrument and an agency, in conjunction with other instruments and other agencies of a more formidable and destructive character, to enforce the cession of Mexican territory, to acquire territory for new States, new States to be added to this Union. We know, every intelligent man knows, that there is no stronger desire in the breast of a Mexican citizen, than to retain the territory which belongs to the Republic. We know that the Mexican people will part with it, if part they must, with regret, with pangs of sorrow. That we know; we know it is all forced; and, therefore, because we know it must be forced, because we know, that whether the government, which we consider our creature, do or do not agree to it, we know that the Mexican *people* will never accede to the terms of this treaty but through the impulse of absolute necessity, and the impression made upon them by irresistible force, therefore we purpose to overwhelm them with another army. We purpose to raise another army of ten thousand regulars and twenty thousand volunteers, and to pour them in and upon the Mexican people.

Now, sir, I should be happy to concur, notwithstanding all this tocsin, and all this cry of all the Semproniuses in the land, that *their* "voices are still for war," I should be happy to agree, and substantially I do agree, with the opinion of the Senator from South Carolina. I think I have myself uttered the sentiment, within a fortnight, to the same effect, — that after all, *the war with Mexico is substantially over*, — that there can be no more fighting. The war places us, at this moment, in an armed state, but not in a condition of daily battle. Now, in the present state of things, my opinion is, that the people of this country will not sustain the war, with a view of further conflicts and further subjugation. They will not submit to its heavy expenses, nor will they find any gratification in putting the bayonet to the throats of the Mexican people.

For my part, I hope the Ten Regiment Bill will never become a law.

Three weeks ago, I should have entertained that hope with the utmost confidence. Events instruct me to abate my confidence. I still *hope* it will not pass.

And here I dare say I shall be called by some a "Mexican Whig." The man who can stand up here and say, that he hopes that what the administration projects, and the further prosecution of the war with Mexico requires, may not be carried into effect, must be an enemy to his country, or, what gentlemen have considered the same thing, an enemy to the President of the United States, and to his administration and his party. He is a Mexican. Sir, I think very badly of the Mexican character, high and low, out and out; but names do not terrify me. Besides, if I have suffered or am to suffer in this respect, if I have rendered myself subject to the reproaches of these stipendiary presses, these hired abusers of the motives of public men, I have the honor on this occasion to be in very respecable company. In the vituperative, accusative, denunciatory sense of that term, I don't know a greater Mexican in this body, than the honorable Senator from Michigan, the Chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs.

Mr. Cass. — Will the gentleman be good enough to explain what sort of a Mexican I am?

Mr. Webster. — That's exactly the thing, sir, that I now propose to do. On the resumption of the bill in the Senate the other day, the gentleman told us that its principal object was to *frighten* Mexico, it would touch his *humanity* too much to *hurt* her! He would frighten her—

Mr. Cass. — Does the gentleman affirm that I said that?

Mr. Webster. — Yes, twice.

Mr. Cass. — No sir, I beg your pardon, I did not say it. I did not say it would touch my humanity to hurt her.

Mr. Webster. — Be it so —

Mr. Cass. — Will the honorable Senator allow me to repeat my statement of the object of the bill? I said it was two-fold, — *first*, that it would enable us to prosecute the war if necessary, and *second*, that it would show Mexico we were prepared to do so; and thus by its moral effect, would induce her to ratify the treaty.

Mr. Webster. — The gentleman said that the principal object of the bill was to *frighten* Mexico; and that this would be more *humane* than to harm her.

Mr. Cass. — That's true.

Mr. Webster. — It is true, is it?

Mr. Cass. — Yes sir.

Mr. Webster. — Very well — I thought as much. Now, sir, the remarkable characteristic of that speech, that which makes it so much a Mexican speech, is, that the gentleman spoke it in the hearing of Mexico, as well as in the hearing of the Senate. We are accused here, because what we say is heard by Mexico, and Mexico derives encouragement from what is said here. And yet the honorable member comes forth and tells Mexico, that the principal object of the bill is to *frighten* her! His words have passed along the wires; they are on the Gulf, and are floating away to Vera Cruz; and when they get there, they will signify to Mexico that, "after all, ye good Mexicans, my principal object is to *frighten* you; and to the end that you may not be frightened too much, I have given you this indication of my purpose." That's *kind* in him, certainly!

Mr. President, you remember that when *Snug* the joiner was to enact *the lion*, and rage and roar upon the stage, he was quite apprehensive that he might frighten the Duchess and the ladies too much, for "there is not,"

he was told, a "more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living," and "'twere pity of his life, if he should terrify the ladies." And, therefore, by the advice of his comrade, Mr. Nicholas Bottom, he wisely concluded that, in the height and fury of his effort *qua* lion, he would show one half his face from out the lion's neck, and himself speak through, saying plainly, these words, or 'to the same defect,' — "Ladies, or fair ladies, you think I come hither as a *lion*. I am no such thing! I am a man as other men are; — I'm only *Snug, the joiner*." (Great laughter.)

But, sir, in any view of this case, in any view of the proper policy of this government, to be pursued according to any man's apprehension and judgment, where is the necessity for this augmentation, by regiments, of the military force of the country? I hold in my hand a note, which I suppose to be substantially correct, of the present military force of the United States. I cannot answer for its entire accuracy, but I believe it to be substantially according to fact. We have twenty-five regiments of regular troops, of various arms. If full, they would amount to 28,960 rank and file, and including officers, to 30,296 men. These, with the exception of 600 or 700 men, are now all out of the United States and in field service in Mexico, or *en route* to Mexico. But these regiments are not full. Casualties and the climate have sadly reduced their numbers. If the recruiting service were now to yield 10,000 men, it would not more than fill up these regiments, so that every Brigadier, and Colonel, and Captain should have his appropriate, his full command. Here is a call, then, on the country now for the enlistmen of ten thousand men, to complete the regiments in the foreign service of the United States.

I understand, sir, that there is a report from GEN. SCOTT, — from GEN. SCOTT, a man who has performed the most brilliant campaign on recent military record, a man who has warred against the enemy, warred against the climate, warred against a thousand unpropitious circumstances, and has carried the flag of his country to the capitol of the enemy, honorably, proudly, *humanely*, to his own permanent honor, and the great military credit of the nation, — GEN. SCOTT! and where is he? At Puebla! at Puebla! undergoing an inquiry before his inferiors in rank, and other persons without military rank; while the high powers he has exercised, and exercised with so much distinction, are transferred to another, I do not say to one unworthy of them, but to one inferior in rank, station and experience to himself.

But GEN. SCOTT reports, as I understand, that in February, there were twenty thousand regular troops under his command and *en route*, and we have thirty regiments of volunteers for the war. If full, this would make 34,000 men, or, including officers, 35,000 in the volunteer service. So, that, if the regiments were full, there would be at this moment a number of troops regular and volunteer, of not less than 55,000 or 60,000 men, including recruits on the way. And with these 20,000 men in the field, of regular troops, there were also 10,000 volunteers, making of regulars and volunteers under GEN. SCOTT, 30,000 men. The Senator from Michigan knows these things better than I do, but I believe this is very nearly the fact. Now, all these troops are regularly officered. There is no deficiency, in the line or in the staff, of officers. They are all full. Where there is any deficiency it consists of men.

Now, sir, there may be a plausible reason for saying that there is difficulty in recruiting at home for the supply of deficiency in the volunteer regiments. It may be said, that volunteers choose to enlist under officers of their own knowledge and selection. They do not incline to enlist as indi-

vidual volunteers, to join regiments abroad, under officers of whom they know nothing. There may be something in that. But, pray, what conclusion does it lead to, if not to this, that all these regiments must moulder away, by casualties or disease, until the privates are less in number than the officers themselves?

But, however it may be, with respect to volunteers, in regard to recruiting for the regular service, in filling up the regiments by pay and bounties according to existing laws, or new laws if new ones are necessary, there is no reason on earth why we should now create 500 new officers, for the purpose of getting 10,000 more men. The officers are already there, in that respect there is no deficiency. All that is wanted is men, and there is place for the men; and I suppose no gentleman here or elsewhere thinks that recruiting will go on faster than would be necessary to fill up the deficiencies in the regiments abroad.

But now, sir, what do we want of a greater force than we have in Mexico? I am not saying what do we want of a force greater than we can supply; but what is the object of bringing these new regiments into the field? What do we propose? There is no army to fight. I suppose there are not 500 men under arms in any part of Mexico — probably not half that number, except in one place. Mexico is prostrate. It is not the government that resists us. Why, it is notorious that the government of Mexico is on our side: that it is an *instrument*, by which we hope to establish such a peace, and accomplish such a treaty as we like. As far as I understand the matter, the government of Mexico owes its life and breath and being to the support of our arms, and to the hope — I do not say how inspired — that some how or other and at no distant period, she will have the pecuniary means of carrying it on, from our three millions, or our twelve millions, or from some of our other millions.

What do we propose to do, then, with these thirty regiments which it is designed to throw into Mexico? Are we going to cut the throats of her people? Are we to thrust the sword deeper and deeper into the "*vital parts*" of Mexico? What is it proposed to do? Sir, I can see no object in it; and yet while we are pressed and urged to adopt this proposition to raise ten-and-twenty-regiments, we are told, and the public is told, and the public believes, that we are on the verge of a safe and honorable peace. Every one looks every morning for tidings of a confirmed peace, or of confirmed hopes of peace. We gather it from the administration, and from every organ of the administration, from Dan to Beersheba. And yet warlike preparations, the incurring of expenses, the imposition of new charges upon the Treasury, are pressed here, as if peace were not in all our thoughts, or, at least, not in any of our expectations.

Now, sir, I propose to hold a plain talk to-day, and I say that, according to my best judgment, the object of the bill is *patronage*, office, the gratification of friends. This very measure for raising ten regiments, creates four or five hundred officers, colonels, subalterns, and not them only, for, for all these I feel some respect; but there are also paymasters, contractors, persons engaged in the transportation service, commissaries, even down to sutlers, *et id genus omne*, — people who handle the public money without facing the foe, — one and all of whom are true descendants, or if not, true representatives, of Ancient Pistol, who said he would

> "sutler be
> "Unto the camp, and *profits* will accrue."

Sir, I hope, with no disrespect for the applicants, and the aspirants, and the patriots, (and among them are some sincere patriots) who would fight for their country, and those others who are not ready to fight, but who are willing to be paid, with no disrespect for any of them, according to their rank and station,

their degree and their merits, I hope they will all be disappointed. I hope that, as the pleasant season advances, the whole may find it for their interest to place themselves, of mild mornings, in the cars, and take their destination to their respective places of honorable private occupation, and of civil employment. They have my good wishes that they may find their homes, from the avenue and the capitol, and from the purlieus of the President's House, in good health themselves, and that they may find their families all very happy to receive them.

But, sir,

——"paulo majora canamus."

This war was waged for the object of creating new States, on the southern frontier of the United States, out of Mexican territory, and with such population as should be found resident thereupon.

I have opposed this object. I am against all accessions of territory to form new States. And this is no matter of sentimentality, which I am to parade before mass-meetings, or before my constituents at home, and not resist by vote. It is not a matter with me of declamation, of regret, or of expressed repugnance. It is a matter of firm, unchangeable purpose. I yield nothing to the force of circumstances that have occurred, or that I can consider as likely to occur. And therefore I say sir, that if I were asked to-day whether, for the sake of peace, I will take a treaty for adding two new States to the Union on our southern border, I say *no*, distinctly, NO. And I wish every man in the United States to understand that to be my judgment and my purpose.

I said upon our *Southern* border, because the present proposition takes that locality. I would say the same of the west, the north-east or of any other border. I resist to-day and forever, and to the end, any proposition to add any foreign territory, South or West, North or East, to the States of this Union, as they are now constituted and held together under the constitution. I do not want the colonists of England on the north; and as little do I want the population of Mexico on the south. I resist and reject all, and all with equal resolution. And, therefore, I say that, if the question were put to me to-day, whether I would take peace under the present state of the country, distressed as it is, during the existence of war, odious as this war is, under circumstances so afflictive to humanity, and so disturbing to the business of those whom I represent, as now exist, I say still, if it were put to me whether I would have peace, with new States, I would say no, — no! And that because, sir, there is no necessity of being driven into that dilemma, in my judgment. Other gentlemen think differently. I hold no man's conscience; but I mean to make a clean breast of it myself; and I protest that I see no reason, I believe there is none, why we cannot obtain as safe a peace, as honorable and as *prompt* a peace, without territory as with it. The two things are *separable*. There is no necessary connection between them. Mexico does not wish us to take her territory, while she receives our money. Far from it. She yields her assent, if she yields it at all, reluctantly, and we all know it. It is the result of *force*, and there is no man here who does not know that. And let me say, sir, that if this Trist paper shall finally be rejected in Mexico, it is most likely to be because those who under our protection hold the power there, cannot persuade the Mexican Congress or people to agree to this cession of territory. The thing most likely to break up what we now expect to take place, is the repugnance of the Mexican people to part with Mexican territory. They would prefer to keep their territory, and that we should keep our money; as I prefer we should keep our money and they their territory. We shall see. I pretend to no powers of prediction. I do not know what may happen. The times are full of strange events. I think it certain that, if the treaty which has gone to Mexico shall fail to be ratified, it

will be because of the aversion of the Mexican Congress, or the Mexican people to cede the territory, or any part of it, belonging to their Republic.

I have said that I would rather have no peace for the present, than to have a peace which brings territory for new States; and the reason is that we shall get peace as soon without territory as with it; more safe, more durable, and vastly more honorable to us, the great Republic of the World.

But we hear gentlemen say we *must* have some territory — the people demand it. I deny it, at least I see no proof of it whatever. I do not doubt there are individuals of an enterprising character, disposed to emigrate, who know nothing about New Mexico but that it is far off, and nothing about California but that it is still farther off, who are tired of the dull pursuits of agriculture and of civil life, that there are hundreds and thousands of such persons to whom whatsoever is new and distant is attractive. They feel the spirit of *borderers*; and the spirit of a borderer, I take it, is to be tolerably contented with his condition where he is, until somebody goes to regions beyond him; and then his eagerness is to take up his *traps* and go still farther than he who has thus got in advance of him. With such men, the desire to emigrate is an irresistible passion. At least, so said that great and sagacious observer of human nature, M. Talleyrand, when he travelled in this country in 1797.

But I say I do not find any where any considerable and respectable body of persons who want more territory and such territory. Twenty-four of us last year in this house voted against the prosecution of the war for territory, because we did not want it — both southern and northern men. I believe the southern gentlemen who concurred in that vote found themselves, even when they had acted against what might be supposed to be local feelings and partialities, sustained on the general policy of not seeking territory, or, by the acquisition of territory, bringing into our politics certain embarrassing and embroiling questions and considerations. I do not learn that they suffered from the advocacy of such a sentiment. I believe they were supported in it; and I believe that through the greater part of the south, and even of the south-west, to a great extent, there is no prevalent opinion in favor of acquiring territory, and such territory, and of the augmentation of our population, and by such population. And such, I need not say is, if not the undivided, the preponderating sentiment of all the north.

But it is said we must take territory for the sake of peace. We must take territory! It is the will of the President. If we do not now take what he offers, we may fare worse. Mr. Polk will take no less; *that*, he is fixed upon: he is immovable: he has—put—down—his—foot! Well, sir, he put it down on 54 40: but it didn't stay. I speak of the President, as of all Presidents, with no disrespect. But I know of no reason why *his* opinion and *his* will, *his* purpose declared to be final, should control us, any more than our purpose, formed from equally conscientious motives and under as high responsibilities, should control him. We think he is firm and will not be moved. I should be sorry, sir, very sorry indeed, that we should entertain more respect for the firmness of the individual at the head of the government, than we may entertain for our own firmness. He stands out against us: — Do we fear to stand out against him? For one, I do not. It appears to me to be a slavish doctrine. For one I am willing to meet the issue, and go to the people all over this broad land. Shall we take peace without new states, or refuse peace without new states? I will stand upon that and trust the people. And I do that because I think it right, and because I have no distrust of the people. I am not unwilling to put it to their sovereign decision and arbitration. I hold this to be a question *vital*, permanent, elementary in the future prosperity of the country and the maintenance of the Constitution: and I am willing to trust that question to the people: and I prefer it, because if what I take to be a great Constitutional principle, or what

is essential to its maintenance, is to be broken down, let it be the act of the people themselves: it shall never be my act. I do not distrust the people. I am willing to take their sentiment from the Gulf to the British Provinces, and from the Ocean to the Missouri: Will you continue the war for territory, to be purchased, after all, at an enormous price, a price a thousand times the value of all its purchases; or take peace, contenting yourselves with the honor we have reaped by the military achievements of the army: will you take peace without territory, and preserve the integrity of the Constitution of the Country? I am entirely willing to stand upon that question. I will therefore take the issue: *Peace, with no new states, keeping our money ourselves: or War till new states shall be acquired, and vast sums paid.* That's the true issue. I am willing to leave that before the people and to the people, because it is a question for themselves. If they support me and think with me, very well. If otherwise, if they will have territory, and add new states to the Union, let them do so; and let them be the artificers of their own fortune, for good or for evil.

But, sir, we tremble before Executive power. The truth cannot be concealed. We *tremble* before Executive power! Mr. Polk will take no less than this! If we do not take this, the King's anger may kindle, and he will give us what is worse.

But now, sir, who and what is Mr. Polk? I speak of him with no manner of disrespect. I mean, thereby, only to ask who and what is the President of the United States, for the current moment. He is in the last year of his administration. Formally, officially, it can only be drawn out till the 4th of March next, while really and substantially, we know that two *short* months, will or *may*, produce events that will render the duration of that official term of very little importance. We are on the eve of a Presidential election. That machine which is resorted to to collect public opinion, or party opinion, will be put in operation two months hence. We shall see its result. It may be that the present incumbent of the Presidential office will be again presented, to his party friends and admirers, for their suffrages for the next Presidential term. I do not say how probable or improbable this is. Perhaps it is not entirely probable. Suppose this not to be the result; what then? Why, then, Mr. Polk becomes as absolutely insignificant as any respectable man among the public men of the United States. Honored in private life, valued for his private character, respectable, never eminent, in public life, he will, from the moment a new star arises, have just as little influence as you, or I; and so far as myself am concerned that certainly is little enough.

Sir, political partisans and aspirants and office-seekers, are not *sunflowers*. They do not

> "—— turn to their God when he sets,
> The same look which they turned when he rose."

No, sir, if the respectable gentleman now at the head of the government be agreed upon, there will be those who will commend his consistency, who will be bound to maintain it, for the interest of his party-friends will require it. It will be done. If otherwise, who is there in the whole breadth and length of the land, that will care for the *consistency* of the present incumbent of the office? There will then be new objects. 'Manifest destiny' will have pointed out some other man. Sir, the eulogies are now written, the commendations of praise are already elaborated. I do not say everything fulsome, but everything panegyrical, has already been written out, with *blanks* for names, to be filled when the Convention shall adjourn. When 'manifest destiny' shall be unrolled, all these strong panegyrics, wherever they may light, made beforehand, laid up in pigeon-holes, studied, framed, emblazoned and embossed, shall all come out, and then there will be found to be somebody in the United States

whose merits have been strangely overlooked, marked out by Providence, a kind of miracle, while all will wonder that nobody ever thought of him before, as a fit and the only fit man to be at the head of this great Republic!

I shrink not, therefore, from any thing that I feel to be my duty, on account of any apprehension of the importance and imposing dignity, and power of *will*, ascribed to the present incumbent of that office. But I wish *we* possessed that power of will. I wish we had that firmness — firmness. *Firmness*,

"Si sit, — nullum numen absit."

Yes, sir, I wish we had adherence. I wish we could gather something from the spirit of our brave *corps*, who have met the enemy under circumstances most adverse, and have stood the shock. I wish we could imitate Zachary Taylor in his bivouac on the field of Buena Vista. He said he "would remain for the night; he would *feel* the enemy in the morning and try his position." I wish, before we surrender, we could make up *our* minds to "*feel* the enemy and try his position," and I think we should find him, as Taylor did, under the early sun, on his way to San Louis Potosi. That's *my* judgment.

But, sir, I come to the all-absorbing question, more particularly, of the creation of new States.

When I came into the counsels of the country, Louisiana had been obtained under the treaty with France. Shortly after, Florida was obtained under the treaty with Spain. These two countries, we know, of course, lay on our frontier, and commanded the outlets of the great rivers which flow into the gulf. As I have had occcasion more than once to say, in the first of these instances the President of the United States (Mr. Jefferson) supposed that an amendment of the Constitution was required. He acted upon that supposition. Mr. Madison was Secretary of State, and, upon the suggestion of Mr. Jefferson, proposed that the proper amendment to the Constitution should be submitted to bring Louisiana into the Union. Mr. Madison drew it and submitted it to Mr. Adams, as I have understood. Mr. Madison did not go upon any general idea that new States might be admitted. He did not suggest a general amendment of the Constitution in that respect. But the amendment of the Constitution which he proposed and submitted to Mr. Adams, was a simple declaration by a new article, that "The province of Louisiana is hereby declared to be part and parcel of the United States." Public opinion, seeing the great importance of the acquisition, took a turn favorable to the affirmation of the power. The act was acquiesced in, and Louisiana became a part of the Union, without any alteration of the Constitution.

On the example of Louisiana, Florida was admitted.

Now, sir, I consider those transactions as passed, settled, legalized. There they stand, as matters of political history. They are facts against which it would be idle at this day to contend.

My first agency in these matters was upon the proposition for admitting Texas into this Union. That I thought it my duty to oppose, upon the general ground of opposing all annexation of new States out of foreign territory; and, I may add, and I ought to add in justice, of States in which slaves were to be represented in the Congress of the United States, on the ground of its inequality. It happened to me, sir, to be called upon to address a political meeting in New York in 1837 or '38, after the recognition of Texan Independence. I state now, sir, what I have often stated before, that no man from the first, has been a more sincere well-wisher to the government and the people of Texas, than myself. I looked upon the achievement of their independence in the battle of San Jacinto, as an extraordinary, almost a marvellous, incident in the affairs of mankind. I was among the first disposed to acknowledge her independence. But from the first, down to this moment, I opposed, as far as I was able,

the annexation of new States to this Union. I stated my reasons on the occasion now referred to, in language which I have now before me and which I beg to present to the Senate:

"It cannot be disguised, gentlemen, that a desire or intention is already manifested to annex Texas to the United States. On a subject of such mighty magnitude as this, and at a moment when public attention is drawn to it, I should feel myself wanting in candor, if I did not express my opinion; since all must suppose that on such a question, it is impossible I should be without some opinion.

"I say then, gentlemen, in all frankness, that I see objections, I think insurmountable objections, to the annexation of Texas to the United States. When the Constitution was formed, it is not probable that either its framers or the people ever looked to the admission of any States into the Union, except such as then already existed, and such as should be formed out of territories then already belonging to the United States. Fifteen years after the adoption of the Constitution, however, the case of Louisiana arose. Louisiana was obtained by treaty with France; who had recently obtained it from Spain; but the object of this acquisition, certainly, was not mere extension ot territory; other great political interests were connected with it. Spain, while she possessed Louisiana, had held the mouths of the great rivers which rise in the Western States and flow into the Gulf of Mexico. She had disputed our use of these rivers already, and with a powerful nation in possession of these outlets to the sea, it is obvious that the commerce of all the West was in danger of perpetual vexation. The command of these rivers to the sea was, therefore, the great object aimed at in the acquisition of Louisiana. But that acquisition naturally brought territory along with it, and three States now exist, formed out of that ancient province.

"A similar policy and a similar necessity, though perhaps not entirely so urgent, led to the acquisition of Florida.

"Now, no such necessity, no such policy, requires the annexation of Texas. The accession of Texas to our territory is not necessary to the full and complete enjoyment of all which we already possess. Her case, therefore, stands entirely different from that of Louisiana and Florida. There being, then, no necessity for extending the limits of the Union, in that direction, we ought, I think, for numerous and powerful reasons, to be content with our present boundaries.

"Gentlemen, we all see, that by whomsoever possessed, Texas is likely to be a slaveholding country, and I frankly avow my entire unwillingness to do anything which shall extend the slavery of the African race on this Continent, or add other slaveholding States to the Union. When I say that I regard slavery in itself as a great moral, social, and political evil, I only use language which has been adopted by distinguished men, themselves citizens of slaveholding States. I shall do nothing, therefore, to favor or encourage its further extension. We have slavery already amongst us. The Constitution found it among us; it recognised it, and gave it solemn guaranties. To the full extent of these guaranties we are all bound, in honor, in justice, and by the Constitution. All the stipulations contained in the Constitution, in favor of the slaveholding States which are already in the Union, ought to be fulfilled, in the fullness of their spirit, and to the exactness of their letter. Slavery, as it exists in the States, is beyond the reach of Congress. It is a concern of the States themselves; they have never submitted it to Congress, and Congress has no rightful power over it. I shall concur, therefore, in no act, no measure, no menace, no indication of purpose, which shall interfere, or threaten to interfere, with the exclusive authority of the several States over the subject of slavery as it exists within their

respective limits. All this appears to me to be matter of plain and imperative duty.

"But when we come to speak of admitting new States, the subject assumes an entirely different aspect. Our rights and our duties are then both different.

"The free States, and all the States, are then at liberty to accept or reject. When it is proposed to bring new members into this political partnership, the old members have a right to say on what terms such new partners are to come in, and what they are to bring along with them. In my opinion, the people of the United States will not consent to bring a new, vastly extensive and slave-holding country, large enough for half a dozen or dozen States, into the Union. In my opinion they ought not to consent to it. Indeed, I am altogether at a loss to conceive what possible benefit any part of this country can expect to derive from such annexation; all benefit to any part is at least doubtful and uncertain; the objections obvious, plain, and strong. On the general question of slavery, a great portion of the community is already strongly excited. The subject has not only attracted attention as a question of politics, but it has struck a far deeper toned chord. It has arrested the religious feeling of the country; it has taken strong hold on the consciences of men. He is a rash man, indeed, and little conversant with human nature, and especially has he a very erroneous estimate of the character of the people of this country, who supposes that a feeling of this kind is to be trifled with or despised. It will assuredly cause itself to be respected. It may be reasoned with, it may be made willing, I believe it is entirely willing, to fulfil all existing engagements, and all existing duties, to uphold and defend the Constitution, as it is established, with whatever regrets about some provisions which it does actually contain. But to coerce it into silence — to endeavor to restrain its free expression — to seek to compress and confine it, warm as it is, and more heated as such endeavors would inevitably render it, should all this be attempted, I know nothing, even in the Constitution, or the Union itself, which would not be endangered by the explosion which might follow.

"I see, therefore, no political necessity for the annexation of Texas to the Union; no advantages to be derived from it; and objections to it, of a strong, and in my judgment, decisive character.

"I believe it to be for the interest and happiness of the whole Union to remain as it is, without diminution and without addition."

Well, sir, for a few years I held a position in the Executive administration of the government. I left the Department of State in 1843, in the month of May. Within a month after another, an intelligent gentleman, for whom I cherished a high respect, and who came to a sad and untimely end, had taken my place, I had occasion to know — not officially, but from circumstances — that the Annexation of Texas was taken up by Mr. Tyler's Administration, as an Administration measure. It was pushed, pressed, insisted on; and I believe the honorable gentleman to whom I have referred (Mr. Upshur) had something like a passion for the accomplishment of this purpose. And I am afraid that the President of the United States at that time suffered his ardent feelings not a little to control his more prudent judgment. At any rate, I saw, in 1843, that Annexation had become a *purpose* of the Administration. I was not in Congress nor in public life. But seeing this state of things, I thought it my duty to admonish, so far as I could, the country of the existence of that purpose. There are gentlemen, many of them at the North, there are gentlemen now in the capitol, who know, that in the summer of 1843, being fully persuaded that this purpose was embraced with zeal and determination by the Executive Department of the Government of the United States, I thought it my duty, and asked them to concur with me in the attempt, to let that purpose be known to the country.

I conferred with gentlemen of distinction and eminence. I proposed means of exciting public attention to the question of Annexation, before it should have become a party question; for I had learned that when any topic becomes a *party* question, it is in vain to argue upon it.

But the optimists, and the quietists, and those who said all things are well, and let all things alone, discouraged, discountenanced and repressed any such effort. The North, they said, could take care of itself; the *country* could take care of itself, and would not sustain Mr. Tyler in his project of Annexation. When the time should come, they said, the power of the North would be felt, and would be found sufficient to resist and prevent the consummation of the measure. And I could now refer to paragraphs and articles in the most respectable and leading journals of the North, in which it was attempted to produce the impression that there was no danger, there could be no addition of new States, and men need not alarm themselves about that.

I was not in Congress, sir, when the preliminary resolutions, providing for annexing Texas, passed. I only know that, up to a very short period before the passage of those resolutions, the impression in that part of the country of which I have spoken, was that no such measure could be adopted. But I have found in the course of thirty years' experience, that whatever measures the Executive Government may embrace and push, are quite likely to succeed in the end. There is always a *giving way*, somewhere. The Executive Government acts with uniformity, with steadiness, with entire unity of purpose. And sooner or later, often enough, and according to my construction of our history, quite *too* often, it effects its purposes. In this way it becomes the predominating power of the Government.

Well, sir, just before the commencement of the present Administration, the resolutions for the Annexation of Texas were passed in Congress. Texas complied with the provisions of those resolutions, and was here, or the case was here, on the 22d day of December, 1845, for her final admission into the Union, as one of the States. I took occasion then to say:

"Mr. President, there is no citizen of this country who was more kindly disposed towards the people of Texas than myself, from the time they achieved, in so very extraordinary a manner, their independence from the Mexican Government. I have shown, I hope, in another place, and shall show in all situations, and under all circumstances, a just and proper regard for the people of that country; but, with respect to its annexation to this Union, it is well known that, from the first announcement of any such idea, I have felt it my duty steadily, uniformly, and zealously to oppose it. I have expressed opinions and urged arguments against it, every where, and on all occasions on which the subject came under consideration. I could not now, if I were to go over the whole topic again, adduce any new views, or support old views as far as I am aware, by any new arguments or illustrations. My efforts have been constant and unwearied; but, like those of others, they have failed of success. I will, therefore, sir, in very few words, acting under the unanimous resolution and instructions of both branches of the Legislature of Massachusetts, as well as in conformity to my own settled judgment and full conviction, recapitulate before the Senate and before the community, the objections which have prevailed, and must always prevail, with me against this measure of annexation. In the first place, I have, on the deepest reflection, long ago come to the conclusion, that it was of very dangerous tendency and doubtful consequences, to enlarge the boundaries of this Government or the territories over which our laws are now established. There must be some limit to the extent of our territory, if we would make our institutions permanent. And in this permanency lives the great subject of all my political efforts, the paramount object of my political regard. The Government

is very likely to be endangered, in my opinion, by a further enlargement of its already vast territorial survey.

"In the next place, I have always wished that this country should exhibit to the nations of the earth the example of a great, rich, and powerful republic, which is not possessed by a spirit of aggrandizement. It is an example, I think, due from us to the world, in favor of the character of republican government.

"In the third place, sir, I have to say, that while I hold, with as much integrity, I trust, and faithfulness as any citizen of this country, to all the original arrangements and compromises in which the Constitution under which we now live was adopted, I never could, and never can, persuade myself to be in favor of the admission of other States into the Union, as slave States, with the inequalities which were allowed and accorded to the slaveholding States then in existence, by the Constitution. I do not think that the free States ever expected, or could expect, that they would be called on to admit further slave States having the advantages, the unequal advantages, arising to them from the mode of apportioning representation under the existing Constitution.

"Sir, I have never made an effort, and never propose to make an effort; I have never countenanced an effort, and never mean to countenance an effort, to disturb the arrangements as originally made, by which the various States came into the Union; but I cannot avoid considering it quite a different question when a proposition is made to admit new States, and that they be allowed to come in with the same advantages and inequalities which existed in regard to the old."

Now, sir, as I have said, in all this I acted under resolutions of the State of Massachusetts, certainly concurring with my own judgment, so often repeated and reaffirmed by the unanimous consent of all men of all parties, that I could not well go through the series, declaring not only the impolicy, but the unconstitutionality of such annexation. And the case presented is this:—if a State proposed to come in, comes in as a *slave* State, it increases that *inequality* in the condition of the people which already exists, and which, so far as it exists, I would never attempt to alter, which I would preserve by my vote and by whatever influence I might possess. Since it was a part of the original compact, let it stand, but I will not consent to augment, or extend that inequality. But there is another consideration of vastly more general importance even than that, more general, because it affects all the States, free and slaveholding; and that is, if the States, formed out of territory thus thinly peopled, come in, they necessarily, inevitably, break up the relation existing between the two branches of the Legislature and destroy its balance. They break up the constitutional relation between the Senate and House of Representatives. If you bring in new States, every State that comes in must have two Senators, while it may have fifty thousand or sixty thousand people and no more. You will thus have several States which shall have more Senators than Representatives. Can any thing occur to disfigure and derange the frame of government under which we live more than that? Here will be a Senate bearing no proportion to the people, out of all relation, a Senate formed by the addition of new States which may have only *one* representative while it has *two* Senators, while others have ten, fifteen, thirty Representatives, and but two Senators. A Senate added to, augmented by these new Senators from States where there are few people, becomes an odious *oligarchy*. It holds power without adequate constituency. Sir, it is but *boroughmongering* on a large scale.

Now, sir, I do not depend on theory. I ask you, and I ask the Senate, and the country, to look at facts, to see where we were when we made the departure three years ago, and where we now are; and I shall leave it to imagination to conjecture where we soon shall be.

We admitted Texas as one State for the present. But if you will refer to

the resolutions providing for the annexation of Texas, you will find a provision that it shall be in the power of Congress hereafter to make *four* other new States out of Texan territory. Present and prospectively, therefore, *five* new States, sending *ten* Senators, may come into the Union out of Texas. Three years ago we did that. Now we propose to make two States more: for undoubtedly if we take what the President recommends, New Mexico and California, each will make a State, — so that there will be *four* Senators. We shall have then, in this new territory, seven States sending *fourteen* Senators to this Chamber. Now what will be the relation between the Senate and the people, or the States from which they come?

I do not understand that there is any accurate census of Texas. It is generally supposed to contain 150,000 persons. I doubt whether it is over 100,000. (Mr. Mangum said '149,000.') Well, call it 150,000. Well, sir, Texas is not destined to be a country of dense population. Suppose it to have 150,000 people. By the best accounts, and I have gone over all I could find, New Mexico may have 60 or 70,000 inhabitants, such as they are — say 70,000. In California it is supposed there are but 25,000 now; but undoubtedly if it become ours, persons originally from the Western country will emigrate to the neighborhood of San Francisco, where there is some good land and some interesting country, and they may reach 60 or 70,000. Put them down for 70,000. We have then in the whole territory, upon this estimate, which is as large as any man puts it, 290,000 people; and they may send us, whenever we ask for them, fourteen Senators. Less than the population of Vermont, and not *one eighth* part that of New York! Fourteen Senators and no more people than Vermont! no more people than New Hampshire, and not so many as the good State of New Jersey! But, then, Texas claims to the line of the Rio Grande, and to run along that river; and if that be her true line, then of course she absorbs a considerable, the greater part, of that which is now called New Mexico. I shall not argue the question of the true south or western line of Texas. I will only say, what must be apparent to every body who will look at the map, and learn any thing of the matter, that New Mexico cannot be divided by the Rio Grande, a shallow, fordable river, creeping along a narrow valley, at the base of enormous mountains. New Mexico must remain together, and be a State, with 60,000 people, and so it will be, and so will be California.

Suppose Texas to remain a unit for the present, let it be one State for the present, still we shall have *three* States, Texas, New Mexico and California: and we shall have then *six* Senators for less than 300,000 people. We shall have as many for those 300,000 whom they will represent, as for New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio, with their four or five *millions* of people: and that's what you call *equal* government! Is not this enormous? Have gentlemen considered it — have they looked at it? Are they willing to look it in the face and then say they embrace it? I trust in God that the people will look at it, consider it and reject it.

And now let me add that this disproportion *can never be diminished*. It must remain forever. How will you go to work to diminish it? Texas with her 150,000 people, forms one State. Suppose population to flow in; where will it go? not to the densely settled portions, but it will spread over the whole region; it will go to places remote from the Gulf, — to places remote from the present capital of Texas; and, therefore, so soon as there are in the north part of Texas people enough to satisfy the conditions of the constitution of the United States, or rather the practice of Congress, for the formation of new States, a new State may be formed; and then we shall have another new State made. I do not doubt, it is all chalked out now.

Then, as to New Mexico, there can be no more people there than there are

now. The man is ignorant, stupid, who can look upon the map and see what that country is, and suppose that it can have more people than it has now, some sixty or seventy thousand. It is an old settled country, the people living along the bottom of the valley, upon the two sides of the garter which stretches through it, and is full only of land holders and miserable *peons:* and it can sustain, not only under their cultivation but under any cultivation to which the American race will submit, no more people than are there now. And two Senators will come from New Mexico with its present population to the end of our lives and those of our children.

And now how is it with California? We propose to take California from the 47th degree of north latitude to the 32d. We propose to take ten degrees along the coast of the Pacific. All along the coast for that great distance are settlements and villages and ports : and back, all is wilderness and barrenness and Indian country. But if, just about St. Francisco and perhaps Monterey, emigrants enough should settle to make up one State, then the people 500 miles off would have another State. And so this disproportion of the Senate to the people will go on and *must* go on, and we cannot prevent it.

I say, sir, that according to my conscientious conviction we are now fixing on the constitution of the United States and its frame of government, a *monstrosity*, a disfiguration, an enormity! Sir, I hardly dare trust myself. I don't know but I may be under some delusion. I don't know but my head is turned. It may be the weakness of mine eyes that forms this monstrous apparition! But if I may trust myself, if I may persuade myself that I am in my right mind, then it does appear to me that we, in this Senate, have been, and are acting, and are likely to be acting hereafter, and immediately, a part which will form the most remarkable epoch in the history of our country.

I hold it to be enormous, — flagrant; an outrage upon all the principles of popular Republican government, and on the elementary provisions of the constitution under which we live, and which we have sworn to support.

But then, sir, what *relieves* the case from this enormity? What is our reliance? Why, it is that we stipulate that these new States shall only be brought in, *at a suitable time*. And pray, what is to constitute the suitableness of time? Who is to judge of it? I tell you, sir, that that suitable time will come when the preponderance of *party power here*, makes it necessary to bring in new States! Be assured it will be a suitable time when votes are wanted in this Senate. We have had some little experience of that. Texas came in at a 'suitable time' — a *very* suitable time! Texas was finally admitted in December 1845. My friend near me here, for whom I have a great regard, whose acquaintance I have cultivated with pleasure, (Mr. Rusk,) took his seat in March, 1846, with his colleague. In July 1846, these two Texan votes turned the balance in the Senate, and overthrew the Tariff of 1842, in my judgment the best system of revenue ever established in this country.

Gentlemen on the opposite side, think otherwise. They think it fortunate. They think that was a suitable time, and they mean to take care that other times shall be equally suitable. I understand it perfectly well. That's the difference of opinion between me and these honorable gentlemen. To their policy, their objects and their purposes, the time was *suitable*, and the aid was efficient and decisive.

Sir, in 1850 perhaps a similar question may be agitated here. It is not likely to be before that time, but agitated it will be then, unless a change in the administration of the government shall take place. According to my apprehension, looking at general results, as flowing from our established system of Commerce and Revenue, at about 1850, in two years from this, we shall probably be engaged in a new revision of our system : in the work of establishing, if we can, a Tariff of specific duties, — of protecting, if we can, our domestic industry and

the manufactures of the country, in the work of preventing, if we can, the overwhelming flood of foreign importations. Suppose that to be part of the future: that would be exactly the 'suitable time,' if necessary, for two Senators from New Mexico to make their appearance here.

But, again, we hear other lulling and soothing tones, which quiet none of my alarms, assuage none of my apprehensions — commend me to my nightly rest with no more resignation. And that is the plea, that *we may trust the popular branch of the Legislature*, we may look to the House of Representatives, to the Northern and Middle States, and even the sound men of the South, and trust *them* to take care that new States be not admitted sooner than they should be, or for party purposes. I am compelled by experience, to distrust all such reliances. If we cannot rely on ourselves, when we have the clear constitutional authority competent to carry us through, and motives intensely powerful, I beg to know how we can rely on others? Have we more reliance on the patriotism, the firmness of others, than on our own?

Besides, experience shows us that things of this sort may be *sprung* upon Congress and the people. It was so in the case of Texas. It was so in the Twenty-eighth Congress. The members of that Congress were not chosen to decide the question of Annexation or no Annexation. They came in on other grounds, political and party, and were supported for reasons not connected with that question. What then? The Administration sprung upon them the question of Annexation. It obtained a *snap* judgment upon it, and carried the measure of Annexation. That is indubitable, as I could show by many instances, of which I shall state only one.

Four gentlemen from the State of Connecticut were elected before the question arose, belonging to the dominant party. They had not been here long before they were committed to Annexation; and when it was known in Connecticut that Annexation was in contemplation, remonstrances, private, public and legislative, were uttered in tones that any one could hear who could hear thunder. Did these move those members? Not at all. Every one of them voted for Annexation! The election came on, and they were all turned out to a man. But what did those care for that, who had had the *benefit* of their votes? Such agencies, if it be not more proper to call them such instrumentalities, retain respect no longer than they continue to be useful.

Sir, we take New Mexico and California; who is weak enough to suppose that there's an end? Don't we hear it avowed every day, that it would be proper also to take Sonora, Tamaulipas and other provinces and States of Northern Mexico? Who thinks that the hunger for dominion will stop here of itself? It is said, to be sure, that our present acquisitions will prove so lean and unsatisfactory, that we shall seek no further. In my judgment, we may as well say of a rapacious animal, that if he has made one unproductive hunt, he will not try for a better foray.

But farther. There are some things one can argue against with temper, and submit to, if overruled, without mortification. There are other things that seem to affect one's consciousness of being a sensible man, and to imply a disposition to impose upon his common sense. And of this class of topics, or pretences, I have never heard of any thing, and I cannot conceive of any thing, more ridiculous in itself, more absurd, and more affrontive to all sober judgment, than the cry that we are getting indemnity, *indemnity*, by the acquisition of New Mexico and California. I hold they are not worth a dollar: and we pay for them vast sums of money! We have expended, as every body knows, large treasures in the prosecution of the war; and now what is to constitute this indemnity? What do gentlemen mean by it? Now, sir, let us see how this stands. We get a country. We get, in the first instance, a cession, or an acknowledg-

ment of boundary, (I care not which way you state it,) of the country between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. What this country is, appears from a publication made by a gentlemen in the other House, (Major Gaines.) He says the whole country is worth *nothing*.

"The country from the Nueces to the valley of the Rio Grande is poor, sterile, sandy, and barren — with not a single tree of any size or value on our whole route. The only tree which we saw, was the musquit tree, and very few of these. The musquit is a small tree, resembling an old and decayed peach tree. The whole country may be truly called a perfect waste, uninhabited and uninhabitable. There is not a drop of running water between the two rivers, except in the two small streams of San Salvador and Santa Gartrudus, and these only contain water in the rainy season. Neither of them had running water when we passed them. The chaparral commences within forty or fifty miles of the Rio Grande. This is poor, rocky, and sandy; covered with prickly pear, thistles, and almost every sticking thing — constituting a thick and perfectly impenetrable undergrowth. For any useful or agricultural purpose, the country is not worth a *sous*.

"So far as we were able to form any opinion of this desert upon the other routes which had been travelled, its character every where between the two rivers, is pretty much the same. We learned that the routes pursued by General Taylor, south of ours, was through a country similar to that through which we passed; as also was that travelled by Gen. Wool from San Antonio to Presidio, on the Rio Grande. From what we both saw and heard, the whole command came to the conclusion which I have already expressed — that it was worth *nothing*. I have no hesitation in saying, that I would not hazard the life of one valuable and useful man for every foot of land between San Patricio and the valley of the Rio Grande. The country is not now and can never be of the *slightest value*."

Major Gaines has been through this region lately. He is a competent observer. He is contradicted by nobody. And so far as that country is concerned, I take it for granted that it is not worth a dollar.

Now of New Mexico — what of that? Forty-nine fiftieths, at least, of the whole of New Mexico, are a barren waste, a desert plain, or mountain, with no wood, no timber: little faggots for lighting a fire are carried 30 or 40 miles on mules; there is no natural fall of rains there, as in temperate climates. It is Asiatic in scenery altogether — enormously high mountains, running up some of them 10,000 feet — with narrow valleys at their bases, through which streams sometimes trickle along. A strip, a garter winds along, through which runs the Rio Grande, from far away up in the Rocky Mountains to latitude thirty-three, a distance of three or four hundred miles. There these 60,000 persons are. In the mountains on the right and left, are streams which, obeying the natural tendency, as laterals, should flow into the Rio Grande, and which, in certain seasons, when rains are abundant, do, some of them, actually reach the Rio Grande, while the greater part always, and all for the greater part of the year, never reach an outlet to the sea, but are absorbed in the sands and desert plains of the country. There is no cultivation there. There is cultivation where there is artificial watering or irrigation, and no where else. Men can live only in the narrow valley, and in the gorges of the mountains which rise around it, and not along the course of the streams which lose themselves in the sands.

Now there is no public domain in New Mexico, — not a foot of land, to the soil of which we shall obtain title. Not an acre becomes ours when the country becomes ours. More than that; the country is full of people, such as they are. There is not the least thing in it to invite settlement from the fertile val-

ley of the Mississippi. And I undertake to say that there would not be two hundred families or persons, who would emigrate from the United States to New Mexico, for agricultural purposes, in fifty years. They could not live there. Suppose they were to cultivate the lands; they could only make them productive in a slight degree by irrigation, or artificial watering. The people there produce little, and live on little. That is not the characteristic, I take it, of the people of the Eastern or of the Middle States, or of the Valley of the Mississippi. They produce a good deal, and they consume a good deal.

Again, sir, New Mexico is not like Texas. I have hoped and I still hope that Texas will be filled up from among ourselves, not with Spaniards; not with *peons:* that its inhabitants will not be Mexican landlords, with troops of slaves, prædial or otherwise.

Mr. Rusk here rose and said he disliked to interrupt the Senator, and therefore he had said nothing while he was describing the country between the Nueces and the Rio Grande; but he wished now to say that when that country comes to be known, it will be found to be as valuable as any part of Texas. The valley of the Rio Grande is valuable from its source to its mouth. But he did not look upon *that* as indemnity; he claimed that as the *right* of Texas. So far as the Mexican population is concerned, there is a good deal of it in Texas; and it comprises many respectable persons, wealthy, intelligent, and distinguished. A good many are now moving in from New Mexico, and settling in Texas.

Mr. Webster. I take what I say, from Major Gaines. But I am glad to hear that any part of New Mexico is fit for the foot of civilized man. And I am glad, moreover, that there are some persons in New Mexico who are not so besotted with their miserable condition as not to make an effort to come out of their country, and get into a better.

Sir, I would, if I had time, call the attention of the Senate to an instructive speech made in the other House by Mr. Smith of Connecticut. He seems to have examined all the authorities, to have conversed with all the travellers, to have corresponded with all our agents. His speech contains all their communications; and I commend it to every man in the United States, who wishes to know what we are about to acquire by the annexation of New Mexico.

New Mexico is secluded, isolated, a place by itself, in the midst and at at the foot of vast mountains, five hundred miles from the settled part of Texas, and as far from any where else! It does not belong any where! It has no *belongings* about it! At this moment it is absolutely more retired and shut out from communication with the civilized world, than the Sandwich Islands or other Islands of the Pacific Sea. In seclusion and remoteness New Mexico may press hard on the character and condition of Typee. And its people are infinitely less elevated, in morals and in condition, than the people of the Sandwich Islands. We had much better have Senators from Oahu. Far less intelligent are they than the better class of our Indian neighbors. Commend me to the Cherokees — to the Choctaws; if you please, speak of the Pawnees — of the Snakes — the Flatfeet — of anything but the *Diggin* Indians, and I will be satisfied not to take the people of New Mexico. Have they any notion of our institutions, or of *any* free institutions? Have they any notions of popular government? Not the slightest! Not the slightest on earth! When the question is asked — what will be their constitution? it is farcical to talk of such people making a Constitution for themselves. They do not know the meaning of the term, they do not know its import. They know nothing at all about it; and I can tell you, sir, that when they are made a Territory and are to be made a State, such a Constitution as the Executive power of this government may think fit to send them, will be sent and will be adopted. The Constitution of our *fellow citizens* of New Mexico, will be framed in the city of Washington.

Now what says in regard to all Mexico Col. HARDIN, that most lamented and distinguished officer, honorably known as a member of the other House, and who has fallen gallantly fighting in the service of his country? Here is his description:

"*The whole country is miserably watered. Large districts have no water at all. The streams are small, and at great distances apart.* One day we marched on the road from Monclova to Parras, *thirty-five miles, without water* — a pretty severe day's march for infantry.

"Grass is very scarce, and indeed there is none at all in many regions for miles square. Its place is supplied with prickly pear and thorny bushes. There is not one acre in two hundred, more probably not one in five hundred, of all the land we have seen in Mexico, which can ever be cultivated; the greater portion of it is the most desolate region I could ever have imagined. The pure granite hills of New England are a paradise to it, for they are without the thorny briars and venomous reptiles which infest the barbed barrenness of Mexico. The good land and cultivated spots in Mexico are but dots on the map. Were it not that it takes so very little to support a Mexican, and the land which is cultivated yields its produce with little labor, it would be surprising how its sparse population is sustained. All the towns we have visited, with perhaps the exception of Parras, are depopulating, as is also the whole country.

"The people are on a par with their land. One in 200 or 500 is rich, and lives like a nabob; the rest are peons, or servants sold for debt, who work for their masters, and are as subservient as the slaves of the South, and look like Indians, and, indeed, are not more capable of self-government. One man, Jacobus Sanchez, owns three-fourths of all the land our column has passed over in Mexico. We are told we have seen the best part of Northern Mexico; if so, the whole of it is not worth much.

"I came to Mexico in favor of getting or taking enough of it to pay the expenses of the war. I now doubt whether all Northern Mexico is worth the expenses of our column of 3000 men. The expenses of the war must be enormous; we have paid enormous prices for every thing; much beyond the usual prices of the country."

There it is. That's all North Mexico; and New Mexico is not the better part of it.

Sir, there is a recent traveller, not unfriendly to the United States, if we may judge from his work, for he commends us every where, I think an Englishman, named RUXTON. He gives an account of the morals and the manners of the population of New Mexico. And, Mr. President and Senators, I shall take leave to introduce you to these soon to be your respected *fellow citizens* of New Mexico:

"It is remarkable that, although existing from the earliest times of the colonization of New Mexico, a period of two centuries, in a state of continual hostility with the numerous savage tribes of Indians who surround their territory, and in constant insecurity of life and property from their attacks; being also far removed from the enervating influences of large cities, and, in their isolated situation entirely dependent upon their own resources, the inhabitants are totally destitute of those qualities which, for the above reasons, we might naturally have expected to distinguish them, and are as deficient in energy of character and physical courage, as they are in all the moral and intellectual qualities. In their social state but one degree removed from the veriest savages, they might take a lesson even from these in morality and the conventional decencies of life. Imposing no restraint on their passions, a shameless and universal concubinage exists, and a total disregard of morals, to which it would be impossi-

ble to find a parallel in any country calling itself civilized. A want of honorable principle, and consummate duplicity and treachery, characterize all their dealings. Liars by nature, they are treacherous and faithless to their friends, cowardly and cringing to their enemies; cruel, as all cowards are, they unite savage ferocity with their want of animal courage; as an example of which, their recent massacre of Gov. Bent, and other Americans, may be given, — one of an hundred instances."

These, sir, are soon to be our beloved countrymen!

Mr. President, for a good many years I have struggled in opposition to every thing which I thought tended to strengthen the arm of Executive power. I think it is growing more and more formidable every day. And I think that by yielding to it in this, as in other instances, we give it a strength which it will be difficult hereafter to resist. I think that it is nothing less than the fear of Executive power, which induces us to acquiesce in the acquisition of territory, — fear, *fear*, and nothing else.

In the little part which I have acted in public life, it has been my purpose to preserve the people of the United States, what the Constitution designed to make them, *one people*, one in interest, one in character, and one in political feeling. We now seem disposed to depart from that, and to break it all up. What sympathy can there be between the people of Mexico and California and the inhabitants of the Valley of the Mississippi and the Eastern States, in the choice of a President? Do they know the same man? Do they concur in any general constitutional principles? Not at all.

Arbitrary governments may have territories, and distant possessions, because arbitrary governments may rule them by different laws and different systems. Russia may rule the Ukraine and the provinces of the Caucasus and Kamschatka, by different codes, ordinances, or ukases.

We can do no such thing. They must be of us, *part* of us, or else strangers.

I think I see that in progress, which will disfigure and deform the Constitution. While these territories remain territories, they will be a trouble and an annoyance. They will draw after them vast expenses. They will probably require as many troops as we have maintained during the last twenty years, to defend them against the Indian tribes. We must maintain an army at that immense distance. When they shall become states, they will be still more likely to give us trouble.

I think I see a course adopted which is likely to turn the Constitution of the land into a *deformed monster*, into a curse rather than a blessing; in fact, a frame of an unequal government, not founded on popular representation, not founded on equality, but on the grossest inequality. And I think it will go on, or that there is *danger* that it will go on, until this Union shall fall to pieces.

I resist it — to-day and always! Whoever falters, or whoever flies, I continue the contest!

I know, sir, that all the portents are discouraging. Would to God I could auspicate good influences. Would to God that those who think with me, and myself, could hope for stronger support. Would we could stand where we desire to stand. I see the signs are sinister. But with few, or alone, my position is fixed! If there were time I would gladly awaken the country. I believe the country might be awakened; but it may be too late. But supported or unsupported, by the blessing of God, I shall do my duty. I see well enough all the adverse indications. But I am sustained by a deep and a conscientious sense of duty. And while supported by that feeling, and while such great interests are at stake, I defy auguries, and ask no omen but my country's cause!

NOTE.

The following resolutions have been passed by the Legislature of Massachusetts, generally, it is believed, without distinction of political party, against the annexation of Texas, or the creation of new States out of other foreign territory; viz.

1838. March 16th. — "*Resolved*, That we, the Senate and House of Representatives, in General Court assembled, do, in the name of the people of Massachusetts, earnestly and solemnly protest against the incorporation of Texas into this Union, and declare that no act done, or compact made, for such purpose, by the Government of the United States, will be binding on the States or the People."

1843, March 16th. — "*Resolved*, That under no circumstances whatsoever can the people of Massachusetts regard the proposition to admit Texas into the Union in any other light, than as dangerous to its continuance in peace, in prosperity, and in the enjoyment of those blessings which it is the object of a free government to secure."

1844, March 15th. — "*Resolved*, That the power to unite an independent foreign State with the United States, is not among the powers delegated to the General Government by the Constitution of the United States."

1845, Feb. 22d. — "*Resolved*, That Massachusetts has never delegated the power to admit into the Union, States or Territories without or beyond the original territory of the States and Territories belonging to the Union at the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, and that, in whatever manner the consent of Massachusetts may have been given, or inferred, to the admission of the States already by general consent forming part of the Union, from such territory, the admission of such States, in the judgment of Massachusetts, forms no precedent for the admission of Texas, and can never be interpreted to rest on powers granted in the Constitution."

1845, March. — "*Resolved*, That Massachusetts hereby refuses to acknowledge the act of the Government of the United States, authorizing the admission of Texas, as a legal act, in any way binding her from using her utmost exertions in co-operation with other States, by every lawful and constitutional measure, to annul its conditions and defeat its accomplishment."

"*Resolved*, That the annexation of a large slaveholding territory, at the will of the Government of the United States, with the declared intention of giving strength to the institution of domestic slavery in these States, is an alarming encroachment upon the rights of the freemen of the Union, a perversion of the principles of republican government, a deliberate assault upon the compromises of the Constitution, and demands the strenuous, united and persevering opposition of all persons, without distinction, who claim to be the friends of human liberty."

1847, Feb. — "*Resolved*, *unanimously*, That the people of Massachusetts will strenuously resist the annexation of any new territory to this Union in which the institution of slavery is to be tolerated or established; and the Legislature, in behalf of the people of this Commonwealth, do hereby solemnly protest against the acquisition of any additional territory, without an express provision by Congress, that there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in such territory, otherwise than for the punishment of crime."

1847, April 26th. — "*Resolved*, That the annexation of territory with Mexican population upon it, is highly inconsistent with the well-being of this Union."

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